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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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Applicant(s) : Werner Haug
Serial No. : NOT YET KNOWN (PCT/CH01/00117)
Int. Filed : February 22, 2001
For : FRANKING MACHINE

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

S I R:

In advance of the first office action, please amend the claims as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

Replace current claims 1 - 14 by the enclosed amended claims 1 - 14. A marked-up version of amended claims 1 - 14 is also enclosed.

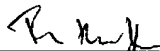
REMARKS

Claims 1 - 14 are in the application.

As a result of the foregoing amendment, the claims have been amended to remove improper multiple dependencies.

Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with the application may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 11-1835.

Respectfully submitted,



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October 20, 2001

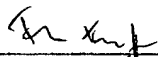
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ENCLS:

Amended Claims;
Marked-Up Version.

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service Express mail under 37 CFR 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, DC 20231.



Friedrich Kueffner

CLEAN VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS

1. Franking machine with at least one print head of an inkjet print mechanism for printing flat postal objects such as letters or postcards insertable into or passing through the machine, comprised of a guide part arranged so as to project about the print head and further relative to its jet opening plane, having correlated therewith a transport device for transporting the postal objects between it and oppositely positioned conveying rollers rotating about axes oriented transverse to the conveying direction, wherein the transport device has two drive rollers connected in driving connection with one another and forming together with the guide part a conveying path, which drive rollers, when viewed in the conveying direction, are arranged before and behind the print head, and has a counterpressure roller arranged opposite thereto, respectively, which exerts a pressure against one drive roller or the postal object transported therebetween and which is reversibly liftable, and comprising a device for maintaining, cleaning and servicing the print head, wherein, when the counterpressure rollers (13, 15) are lowered, a service slide (221), arranged on a guide arrangement (225) so as to be drivingly movable transverse to the conveying direction of the postal objects, is moveable into a service position which is arranged underneath the print head (228).

2. Machine according to claim 1, wherein the guide part (229) is adjustable by means of a control lever (244) connected with the main shaft into a position which is retracted relative to the jet opening plane of the print head (228).
3. Machine according to claim 1, wherein the service slide (201) at its rear end is connected with an eccentric pin (221) fastened to a control disk (218) drivable about a vertical axis.
4. Machine according to claim 1, wherein the service slide (201) at the forward end has a wiper lip (209) extending transversely to the direction of movement and acting during movement of the service slide (201) onto the projecting jet opening plane of the print head (228).
5. Machine according to claim 4, wherein the wiper lip (209) is supported against a spring force on the guide part (229) and passes across the jet opening plane during the sliding movements of the service slide (201).
6. Machine according to claim 4, wherein the wiper lip (209) is arranged in a catch basin (211).

7. Machine according to claim 4, wherein the service slide (201) in the advancing direction has at least one sealing bell (203) which is arranged behind the wiper lip (209) and covers the nozzle opening plane of a print head (228) and can be pressed against the plane by being lifted.
8. Machine according to claim 7, wherein the service slide (201) comprises a Scotch-yoke groove (215) as a connecting device to the control disk (218) for receiving the eccentric pin (221), wherein the groove secures the service slide (201) in the service position when the eccentric pin (221) passes through and, upon further rotational movement of the control disk (218) connected in driving connection with the guide arrangement (225), the service slide (201) is locked in the service position by means of the lifting control curves (226A, 226B) provided on the guide arrangement (225), whereby the sealing bell (203) is pressed against the jet opening plane.
9. Machine according to claim 8, wherein on the guide arrangement (225) a control pin (223) is fastened which engages the control curve provided on the control disk (218).

10. Machine according to claim 7, wherein the controllable motor which is in drive connection with the control disk (218) having a freewheeling device is reversibly configured and in drive connection with a pump which is in communication with the sealing bell (203).
11. Machine according to claim 10, wherein the pump is connected by a suction line with the catch basin (211) correlated with the wiper lip (209).
12. Machine according to claim 7, wherein the pump is connected to the ink source by a suction line via the sealing bell (203) connected in the service position to the print head/the print heads (228).
13. Machine according to claim 12, wherein the print head/the print heads (228) and the ink source are connected by a portion of the suction line.
14. Machine according to claim 3, wherein the control disk (218) comprises a switching cam cooperating with a switch (224) and correlated with the initial position of the service slide (201).

MARKED-UP VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS

1. Franking machine with at least one print head of an inkjet print mechanism for printing flat postal objects such as letters or postcards insertable into or passing through the machine, comprised of a guide part arranged so as to project about the print head and further relative to its jet opening plane, having correlated therewith a transport device for transporting the postal objects between it and oppositely positioned conveying rollers rotating about axes oriented transverse to the conveying direction, wherein the transport device has two drive rollers connected in driving connection with one another and forming together with the guide part a conveying path, which drive rollers, when viewed in the conveying direction, are arranged before and behind the print head, and has a counterpressure roller arranged opposite thereto, respectively, which exerts a pressure against one drive roller or the postal object transported therebetween and which is reversibly liftable, and comprising a device for maintaining, cleaning and servicing the print head, [characterized in that] wherein, when the counterpressure rollers (13, 15) are lowered, a service slide (221), arranged on a guide arrangement (225) so as to be drivingly movable transverse to the conveying direction of the postal objects, is moveable into a service position which is arranged underneath the print head (228).

2. Machine according to claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the guide part (229) is adjustable by means of a control lever (244) connected with the main shaft into a position which is retracted relative to the jet opening plane of the print head (228).
3. Machine according to [claim 1 or 2, characterized in that] claim 1, wherein the service slide (201) at its rear end is connected with an eccentric pin (221) fastened to a control disk (218) drivable about a vertical axis.
4. Machine according to [one of the claims 1 to 3, characterized in that] claim 1, wherein the service slide (201) at the forward end has a wiper lip (209) extending transversely to the direction of movement and acting during movement of the service slide (201) onto the projecting jet opening plane of the print head (228).
5. Machine according to claim 4, [characterized in that] wherein the wiper lip (209) is supported against a spring force on the guide part (229) and passes across the jet opening plane during the sliding movements of the service slide (201).
6. Machine according to [one of the claims 4 and 5, characterized in that] claim 4, wherein the wiper lip (209) is arranged in a catch basin (211).

7. Machine according to [one of the claims 4 to 6, characterized in that] claim 4, wherein the service slide (201) in the advancing direction has at least one sealing bell (203) which is arranged behind the wiper lip (209) and covers the nozzle opening plane of a print head (228) and can be pressed against the plane by being lifted.
8. Machine according to claim 7, [characterized in that] wherein the service slide (201) comprises a Scotch-yoke groove (215) as a connecting device to the control disk (218) for receiving the eccentric pin (221), wherein the groove secures the service slide (201) in the service position when the eccentric pin (221) passes through and, upon further rotational movement of the control disk (218) connected in driving connection with the guide arrangement (225), the service slide (201) is locked in the service position by means of the lifting control curves (226A, 226B) provided on the guide arrangement (225), whereby the sealing bell (203) is pressed against the jet opening plane.
9. Machine according to claim 8, [characterized in that] wherein on the guide arrangement (225) a control pin (223) is fastened which engages the control curve provided on the control disk (218).

10. Machine according to [one of the claims 7 to 9, characterized in that] claim 7, wherein the controllable motor which is in drive connection with the control disk (218) having a freewheeling device is reversibly configured and in drive connection with a pump which is in communication with the sealing bell (203).
11. Machine according to claim 10, [characterized in that] wherein the pump is connected by a suction line with the catch basin (211) correlated with the wiper lip (209).
12. Machine according to [one of the claims 7 to 11, characterized in that] claim 7, wherein the pump is connected to the ink source by a suction line via the sealing bell (203) connected in the service position to the print head/the print heads (228).
13. Machine according to claim 12, [characterized in that] wherein the print head/the print heads (228) and the ink source are connected by a portion of the suction line.
14. Machine according to [one of the claims 3 to 13, characterized in that] claim 3, wherein the control disk (218) comprises a switching cam cooperating with a switch (224) and correlated with the initial position of the service slide (201).